THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The matter was taken up with the Saudi Authorities by the Indian Ambassador. The Ambassador reports that the Govt. of Saudi Arabia has conveyed that as a matter of policy such displays are not allowed in Saudi Arabia.

Import of Rice from Pakistan

*16. SHRI JANARDAN YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian traders are importing rice from Pakistan;

(b) if so, the details of the quantity being imported and the rates thereof;

(c) whether Government are aware of the strong resentment of Indian farmers over the said import which is adversely affecting them; and

(d) if so, the remedial steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

भारतीय इस्पात प्राधिकरण लिमिटेड (सेल) द्वारा उत्पादन

*17. श्री डी.पी. यादव: क्या इस्पात और खान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) भारतीय इस्पात प्राधिकरण लिमिटेड (सेल) द्वारा वर्ष 1997-98 में कुल कितना उत्पादन किया गया;

(ख) क्या यह उत्पादन पिछले वर्ष की तुलना में अधिक है और यदि हां, तो उसकी मात्रा कितनी है; और

(ग) मंत्रालय द्वारा भारतीय इस्पात प्राधिकरण लिमिटेड के माध्यम से वर्ष 1997-98 में कुल कितना लाभ अर्जित किया गया?

इस्पात तथा खान मंत्री (श्री नवीन पटनायक): (क) और (ख) स्टील अथॉरिटी ऑफ इण्डिया लिमिटेड (सेल) ने 1997-98 के दौरान 90.43 लाख टन विक्रेय इस्पात का उत्पादन किया जबकि 1996-97 के दौरान 92.35 लाख टन विक्रेय इस्पात का उत्पादन हुआ था।

(ग) वर्ष 1997-98 के लिए सेल ने 148.59 करोड़ रुपए का लाभ (कर-पूर्व) अर्जित किया और अक्तूबर, 1998 में सरकार को लाभांश के रूप में 35.45 करोड़ रुपए का भुगतान किया।

Patent of coir-geo-textiles

*18. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a US based Sri Lankan company has obtained patent for coir-geo-textiles, a product of coir which has been put to various use in Kerala for a long time, threatening to effect the export of coir-geo-textiles from our country to already established markets in European countries;

(b) whether the Kerala State Government has requested him to take up the matter at the appropriate forum to protect the interest of coir industry in the country; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) to (c) A patent has been granted in Sri Lanka in the name of Lanka Santha entitled "An Erosion Control Blanket/ Turf Reinforcement Mat". The patent has been granted under the patent law of Sri Lanka.

Patents are granted by respective governments under their patent laws and rights thereunder are restricted to the territorial boundary of the country. Whenever information is received about patents being taken on certain products which are not considered patentable, steps are taken to assess whether grant of patent can be challenged.

Land for Development of Gangavaram Port

*19. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY:

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether excess of land occupied by Visakhapatnam Steel Plant is required by the State Government of Andhra Pradesh for development of Gangavaram Port; and

(b) if so, when would it be handed over?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK): (a) and (b) There is no excess land occupied by Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. The land lying apparently